

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 3-10 are pending in this case. The present Amendment amends Claims 1 and 7; cancels Claim 2 without prejudice or disclaimer; and adds Claims 8-10. New Claims 8-10 find support in the claims as originally filed and therefore do not raise a question of new matter.

By way of review, the outstanding Office Action rejected Claims 1, 4, and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Kurahashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,657,081).

Claims 2, 3, 5, and 6 were objected to, but indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. The indication of allowable subject matter is gratefully acknowledged. In response to the indication of allowable subject matter, independent Claim 1 is amended to include the features previously set forth in dependent Claim 2, and dependent Claim 2 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claim 1 of the present application is allowable as acknowledged in the Office Action. Dependent Claims 3-6, which depend from independent Claim 1, are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as independent Claim 1.

Independent Claim 7 has also been amended to recite the features previously set forth in dependent Claim 2. Therefore, independent Claim 7 is presently in condition for formal allowance for at least the same reasons as independent Claim 1.

Also in response to the indication of allowable subject matter, new independent Claims 8-10 are added. New independent Claim 8 incorporates the subject matter indicated as allowable in Claim 3, written in independent form and including the subject matter of Claim 3's base claim and all intervening claims. New independent Claim 9 incorporates the subject matter indicated as allowable in Claim 5, written in independent form and including

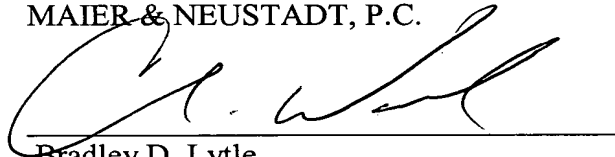
the subject matter of Claim 5's base claim and all intervening claims. New independent Claim 10 incorporates the subject matter indicated as allowable in Claim 6, written in independent form and including the subject matter of Claim 6's base claim and all intervening claims. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new independent Claims 8-10 of the present application is allowable as acknowledged in the Office Action.

Consequently, for the reasons discussed in detail above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance for Claims 1 and 3-7 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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